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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 001115

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: SENIOR MILITARY OFFICIAL ARRESTED IN NORTH KIVU

Classified By: Polcouns Mel Sanderson for Reasons 1.4 B and D

11. (U) SUMMARY: Eighth Military Region Chief of Staff (COS), and four bodyguards were arrested and brought before a military court in Goma following a shoot-out on July 1 that killed seven people. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) Col. Christopher Bindu (a Mai Mai) and four of his armed guards were arrested and brought before a military court on July 2 in response to a July 1 shoot-out in Goma that killed seven people, including four children. According to Gen. Amisi, the 8th Military Region Commander, the children were caught in the crossfire when shrapnel hit their home. Radio Okapi reported on July 5 that Bindu and his guards would most likely be subject to a public hearing as part of an aggressive campaign by Minister of Defense Onusumba to encourage military discipline.

13. (C) The fighting erupted after Bindu's guards apprehended and disarmed a group of military police patrolling near the COS's residence, MONUC sources said. Following orders from a drunken Bindu, the guards shot and killed an officer who moved after being instructed to stay still. The MPs and Bindu's men exchanged heavy fire until General Amisi and the MP commander arrived at the scene.

14. (C) Comment: Tensions remain high in North Kivu where residents, including Mai Mai, are still distrustful of members of the RCD-G and its former military wing, the ex-ANC who are perceived as Rwandan allies. Bindu's arrest is of symbolic value as it reflects a crack-down on impunity within the Congolese armed forces. At the same time, the MPs were not innocent bystanders, and should also be held accountable for their actions. End Comment.

MEECE